

MUSH WITH PRIDE News

Providing Responsible Information on a Dog's Environment - Number 31, Winter 2006



Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Mush with PRIDE Members:

Welcome to another hectic northern winter, made even stranger, at least in Interior Alaska, by a definite lack of snow. I'm still running over stumps on what are normally smooth trails, and have broken more than one sled piece going over tussocks.

Please take a look at the two articles from the Yukon. Rod (and his wife Martha) are strong PRIDE supporters, and they have directly benefited from getting their yard into the inspection program. Whether or not you might benefit financially from having a PRIDE inspected yard, you certainly can feel proud to have passed the grade. We are still waiting for some "non-traditional" yards/kennels to be inspected. If you have a couple of skijoring dogs that are mainly indoor pets, consider going through the program and let us know what worked and what didn't. Or see if there is something the program asks for that simply isn't possible because of local legal requirements. We worked hard to make the program be as widely applicable as possible, but I'm sure there are improvements to be made.

Stephen Reynolds' article came after lots of soul searching at the Annual Meeting. Most important to me, "who would care if PRIDE died?" Honestly, probably not too many people, until animal rights radicals used the fact that "mushers don't care enough to keep an organization dedicated to improved sled dog welfare alive" to promote the idea that mushers in general don't really care about their dogs. Think about it. There may not be a pressing crisis on mushing right now, but who knows when the next tethering prohibition may raise its head.

On a brighter note, you should have received a copy of the coloring book by now. Thanks to lots of hard work by Hilary Schwafel (artist), Bridget Schwafel (Hilary's mom), and several others the book is now reality. It is being sold in several places in Alaska and the Yukon, if you know of a place that might want to distribute it, let us know. We are already almost out of the first printing (3000 copies) and will be making a few changes for the next edition. In particular, Hilary has promised several more images. There have been several thoughts about other improvements, and it is easy to move forward now that we have a physical copy to work with. Thanks so much Hilary, and good luck as you move through college.

Think about where you want to see PRIDE go, and post some thoughts to the PRIDE list serve, or send us a letter. One simple thing you could do to help is to go to our redesigned website (www.mushwithpride.org) and see if it has problems, or let us know if there are any links out there to any of our too numerous old pages.

And more than that, have fun with your dogs, they are the critters that give us the privilege to do what we do.

Happy Tails!

Ken

Mush with PRIDE Board

President - Ken Severin

Vice President - Blake Frecking

Secretary- Jessica Larsen

Treasurer - Scott Faulkner

Junior Liaison - Hilary Schwafel

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The Crisis of Complacency

If a tree falls in the forest, does anybody hear?

If a non-profit, volunteer-run organization disappears due to apathy, does anybody care?

There are thousands of volunteer-run organizations in the North, and thousands of worthwhile causes for people to support North of the 60th parallel. A few of them deal with animals, fewer still with dogs, and very few indeed that support sled dogs and sled dog sports.

Mush with PRIDE (PRIDE) is one of those rare volunteer-run groups of people who believe in;

-Establishing guidelines for proper sled dog care and treatment and enhancing the care of sled dogs by the development of improved husbandry and veterinary practices.

-Educating young people about sled dogs and mushing through existing youth groups and schools and promoting public understanding about the care, treatment, and traditional and modern uses of sled dogs.

-Facilitating communication among dog mushers about the treatment and care of sled dogs and welcoming and assisting beginning mushers.

As someone who attended the 2005 PRIDE Annual General Meeting, it was pretty underwhelming to note that there were only six people in the room, one of them currently on the Board, one working in an official capacity for PRIDE, and four 'others' who wondered whether we had found our way into the wrong meeting...or perhaps had arrived way too early or on the wrong day. In fact, six was the total number of people to attend the PRIDE AGM this past year.

Not a very impressive showing for an organization whose mandates are as valuable to sled dog sports as "Establishing guidelines and enhancing the care of sled dogs", "Educating young people and promoting public understanding about the care, treatment, and uses of sled dogs", and "Facilitating communication among dog mushers and welcoming beginning mushers"...you would think that more mushers would be interested in supporting these goals. Not that day.

There was the inevitable talk about capacity, and 'how to keep this alive' and all that usual discussion that needs to happen when faced with the obvious gap between committed time and energy and the vast potential and scope of the work ahead. No one thought up any quick solutions, but all agreed that without some additional minds, bodies and souls, PRIDE wouldn't be able to sustain itself into the future. So the question was posed, "Does it matter?" If there was no PRIDE, would that make any difference in the mushing world? After all, with only six people expressing an interest, maybe PRIDE is just the fringe element of the sled dog world. Maybe that's a question that everyone who enjoys, runs or owns sled dogs should be asking themselves..."Does it really matter?"

Personally, I think it does matter, and I think that if PRIDE disappeared it would be for the worse, and our sport would suffer in the long-run for the loss of PRIDE. That day I committed myself to try to do my little bit to prevent that from happening.

What about you? Six people can't keep anything going for long. Sure we're all busy...but stop to think about our sport for a minute. Think of all those kids' fun runs, school visits, community races, workshops, sprint races, clinics, mid-distance races, educational programs and marathon races...who are the people who make these things happen? If you didn't say, "Me! I'm doing some of that!", then...we need you to step up...and now!

Find something in the sled dog world that fascinates you, something that gives you satisfaction to do, something that ignites your passion and gives you the energy to pursue improvements and new ideas in our sport...it's the only way it will grow and be around in 10 or 20 years. For those of you who are motivated by "Establishing guidelines and enhancing the care of sled dogs", "Educating young people and promoting public understanding about the care, treatment, and uses of sled dogs", and "Facilitating communication among dog mushers and welcoming beginning mushers"...we hope you will contribute some of your time, energy, brainpower, legwork and money to PRIDE. It's a simple thing...we need people to make PRIDE work.

People to help with fund-raising, people to help with program development, people to bring those programs into the schools, people to promote the kennel certification program, people to have their kennels certified to give meaning to the program criteria, people to stimulate new ideas and convert them from dreams into reality, people to dedicate some time to take action in support of canine care rather than just speaking hollow words, people who see the need and desirability of having PRIDE as a solid, well-supported, well funded organization that keeps the values PRIDE stands for in high public view and awareness over the next several years.

Can you help? Join in and start making a difference with your time and energy today.

Don't fool yourself thinking that SOMEONE ELSE is going to help...we need YOU! If you can bring a few friends with you, all the better.

Hope to see you around, and hope to see many more of you at the 2006 AGM, Saturday October ??, 2006, at the ADMA Symposium in Fairbanks, Alaska. Let's keep PRIDE alive, well and growing in strength.

Stephen Reynolds, Yukon, Canada



PRIDE recently received these comments from Jolene Giese; she noted that if we get a similar paragraph from many members, detailing both what PRIDE has done for them, as well as what PRIDE could do, then we can move forward. Don't forget that you can post comments like these to the listserve as well. Thanks Jolene!

I haven't been a PRIDE member for very long, so I'm not sure of all the ins and outs of the organization. When I first heard about PRIDE I thought it was strictly for big kennels, and as I am a small fish didn't bother to look at it very closely. When our sled dog club got involved with PRIDE, they sent out an email saying we should all look into the organization to better serve our sport. It gave my daughter and myself guidelines in housing our dogs, keeping them safe and healthy. Our vet is a wonderful lady who has never been around sled dogs. When I approached her about the inspection she was thrilled to participate. When she told the office staff she was off to do a kennel inspection a client who happened to be in the office immediately piped up and asked if she needed one too. The vet told her she didn't think her Welsh Corgis needed an inspection but if she wanted to come along and learn something about housing sled dogs she was more than welcome to tag along (the lady declined).



We have numerous Girl Scouts touring ShoeString Kennel every year for their "mushing badge", and we can now point proudly to our kennel certificate and tell them how we earned it.

I look forward to promoting PRIDE here in Wyoming through our school demos, Girl Scouts, and public demos we do for our local tourism board.

*Jolene Giese
ShoeString Kennel, Laramie Wyoming*

Mush with PRIDE Order Form

Membership **New** **Renewal** \$ _____
 \$15/Individual; \$20/Family or Club; \$5/youth under 18; \$10/associate; \$100/Business; quarterly newsletter & a copy of Sled dog Care Guidelines & Equipment Guidelines, First Aid Manual are included with membership. PRIDE membership year starts October 1st. Those received on or after June 1st are good through the following membership year.

Sled Dog Care Guidelines **Quantity** _____ **\$** _____
 Basic Sled dog care and training advice from dozens of the most respected mushers. Includes information on dog yards, feeding and watering, training, husbandry, puppies and more. A 36 page book \$5 each or \$3.50 each for 10 or more.

Equipment Safety Guidelines **Quantity** _____ **\$** _____
 Based on a survey of experienced mushers, covers the basics of safe equipment choices and use. Includes chapters on dog gear, lines, sleds, rigs, skijoring, dog yards, travelling etc. A 36 page book \$5 each or \$3.50 each for 10 or more.

First Aid Manual **Quantity** _____ **\$** _____
 Sled Dog First-Aid Manual, A guide for On-the-Trail Emergency Care, \$5 each.

Mush with PRIDE Patch **Quantity** _____ **\$** _____
 Navy on sky blue background, gold highlights, \$5 each

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Prices include postage in the U.S. If ordering from outside the U.S., please include an additional 15% for postage (except membership). Please include payment with your order, and allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. Mail orders to : Mush with PRIDE, PO Box 84915, Fairbanks, AK 99708 USA.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Country: _____ Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Questions? Call 1-800-507-7433 or e-mail info@mushwithpride.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

MUSH With PRIDE Kennel Certification

Uncommon Journeys Ltd. has been in business since 1997 and provides 7 to 14 day-long dogsledding experiences for guests from around the world. The majority of the trips are cabin and yurt based with four to five trips involving extended itineraries and camping. The product is aimed at a low volume, high margin clientele, many of whom are millionaires and even billionaires. While the nationalities and vocations of our clientele vary greatly they all have one thing in common – they are only interested in patronizing a dogsledding kennel that practices outstanding dog care. Three years ago we were visited by Dr. Rick Brown a well-known veterinarian in the Whitehorse area to perform a kennel evaluation on our behalf in order to achieve a Mush with Pride kennel certification. It was the best thing we ever did. By achieving the highest standard of "Certification Plus" we are able to quantify and thereby market our outstanding dog care to potential clients all over the world. The certification process is voluntary, costs next to nothing yet provides an opportunity for commercial kennels who practice good dog care to differentiate themselves in the marketplace. We have been basically fully booked for three years now, and are beginning to book a year in advance. We enjoy a 30% rate of returning guests and we know from the focus groups we query that dog care is a huge issue to these guests. As an industry we need to constantly be promoting the fact that our dogs are treated as members of our family. Becoming certified by Mush with Pride is an easy way to spread the word while gaining credibility for your company. For more information regarding becoming certified, log on to the Mush with Pride website. The return on your investment will make the effort well worth it!

Rod Taylor, Owner/Operator
Uncommon Journeys Ltd.

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Membership in Mush with PRIDE is open to all. Rates are \$15/Individual, \$20/Family or Club, \$10/Nonvoting associate member, \$5/Youth under 18, \$100/Business (includes four business card ads in the newsletter. Members receive the newsletter, 36 page Sled Dog Care Guidelines and a ballot for elections. Memberships begin on October 1 each year. Those received on or after June 1 are good through the following membership year. Your continued support is much appreciated

PRIDE stands for "Providing Responsible Information on a Dog's Environment." Mush with PRIDE provides information to mushers, the public and the media about the proper care and training of sled dogs. We believe that modern sled dog owners are proud of their dogs as canine athletes that are bred and trained to do what they love - run as part of a team. Mush with PRIDE aims to keep them doing what they love and doing it well. The organization includes a wide variety of mushers - recreationalists and professionals, long-distance and sprint racers, weight puller, skijorers, freight haulers - as well as sled dog veterinarians and other concerned citizens.

Officers and Directors: Ken Severin-President, Blake Freking-Vice President, Secretary-Jessica Larsen, Treasurer-Scott Faulkner
Junior Liaison-Hilary Schwafel, Business Manager-Maureen English

Visit us on the web at www.mushwithpride.org



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